



# State of Wisconsin GOVERNOR'S STATE TRAILS COUNCIL

## Meeting Minutes

**Friday, November 8, 2013**

1000 E. Montgomery St., Community Center, Room D, Sparta, WI

10:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

### **State Trails Council Members present:**

Ken Carpenter; *Wisconsin State Horse Council (equestrians)*

Randy Harden; *Wisconsin ATV Association (ATVs/UTVs)*

Doug Johnson; *Association of Wisconsin Snowmobile Clubs (snowmobiling)*

Bryan Much; *Wisconsin Off-Highway Motorcycle Association (off-highway motorcycles)* [Vice Chair]

Ken Neitzke; *Ice Age Trail Alliance (hiking/backpacking)*

Luana Schneider; *Wisconsin 4-Wheel Drive Association (4-wheel drive vehicles)*

John Siegert; *Bicycle Federation of Wisconsin (mountain biking)*

Jim White; *(boards/small wheels)*

Robbie Webber; *Bicycle Federation of Wisconsin (road/touring biking)* [Chair]

### **State Trails Council Members not in attendance:**

Skip Maletzke; *(Tourism/business)* [Secretary]

Phil Johnsrud; *(non-motorized water trails)*

Mike McFadzen; *WI Nordic Network, Northern Kettle Moraine Nordic Ski Club (cross-country skiing)*

### **Others present:**

Leif Hubbard (*WisDOT*)

Tim Hyema (*Executive Director, Sparta Chamber of Commerce*)

Dave Peterson (*snowmobiling/biking*)

Judy Peterson (*snowmobiling/biking*)

Hank Wozneil (*Wisconsin ATV Association*)

Orlin Clark (*Midwest 4-Wheel Drive Association*)

### **WI DNR Staff present:**

Dan Schuller, Peter Biermeier, Jim Moorhead, Cameron Bump, Brigit Brown

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### **10:00 A.M. – Agenda review/repair and approval of April meeting minutes**

- Webber called the meeting to order. Agenda and minutes approved.

### **10:05 A.M. – Chair Report**

- Robbie Webber announced that she will be going off the council. Mary Ebeling (Madison) has submitted an official application to the governor's office which is currently under review.
- Vulnerable User legislation is making its way through the legislature. This legislation would create tougher penalties for motorists who commit traffic violations that injure or



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kill vulnerable roadway users (bicyclists, pedestrians, emergency responders, in-line skaters and farmers driving farm equipment - motorcyclists have been asked to be excluded from the legislation).

### **10:15 A.M. – Jim Moorhead, Elroy-Sparta State Trail Manager**

- Welcome and overview of area State Trails. In the late 60's the Elroy-Sparta State Trail (EST) was opened to bicyclists (originally it was only open to pedestrians). The La Crosse River ST was originally only a snowmobile trail, opened as a biking and pedestrian trail in the late 80's. The 400 State Trail was developed as a bike/pedestrian trail in 1993. These trails run for a total of 104 miles between Reedsburg and Marshland (north of Trempealeau) and are contiguous. The trail Friends Groups have printed a "Bike 4 Trails" map showing distances and amenities along the trails. These trails will be a main part of Wisconsin's first long-distance bicycling route, Route 30 as part of the U.S. Bicycle Route System. (These are routes identified at a federal level by a consortium of the Adventure Cycling Association and Association of State Highway Transportation Officials).

### **10:30 A.M. – Tim Hyma, Executive Director, Sparta Chamber of Commerce**

- The Sparta Chamber of Commerce is responsible for promoting the Sparta Area and was established in 1854. Based on the area's artesian springs, now known as the 'Bicycling Capital of America'. Easy access, EST is known as the granddaddy of all rail trails. An estimated 60,000 people come annually and spend approximately \$123/day, bringing \$7.4 million in economic impact to the region, \$3 million locally to Sparta. Sparta spends \$90,000/year on advertising and related items: this is a 16:1 return on investment. Although demographics indicate that visitation numbers will decline in the future, Hyma anticipates that economic impact will remain the same due to bike-based visitor demographics (younger, childless, spend more). Sparta also has the Deke Slayton museum, Amish country. They are starting to take a regional approach to their marketing, and are currently working with Friends of the EST to integrate a mobile approach to their website. They are also working to bring back long-distance biking events, and are marketing to other recreational users such as paddlers (With the La Crosse Outdoor Recreation Alliance), motorcyclists (Sparta is along the route to Sturgis), and fishers (Beaver Creek – trout stream). There are 300 miles of snowmobile trails in Monroe County (the county in which Sparta is located).

### **11:00A.M. – DNR Report**

- The internal allocation for Recreational Trail funding is currently at the same match requirement as grants (50-50). Due to decreased to the available match funding to the department (snowmobile, ATV, Stewardship), the department proposes to instead go to 80-20 match (eighty percent RTP, twenty percent state dollars). Dan Schuller and Brigit Brown provided a picture of the current capital development and maintenance needs versus available funding. There were no objections to this proposal.
- Act 168 Two new emergency orders are now in effect: all available dry land trapping must be done using dry trigger traps, and no shooting down or across any trails that are closed to hunting. Permanent rules on these issues are expected to go to public hearing within the next few months and are expected to be in place permanently in the next year.



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- High Cliff Master Plan was approved by the Natural Resources Board two weeks ago, including a boundary expansion for the project. The Rainbow Springs/ Mukwonago River Unit of the Kettle Moraine State Forest Master Plan is in process. Initial public meetings were held and the second set of public meetings will be held in late winter. The Door County State Parks Master Plan will be starting in late winter.

### **11:30 A.M. – Temporary repurposing of trails for special events**

- Bryan Much presented a detailed Powerpoint, highlighting two successful case studies: Zumbro Bottoms in Minnesota where a horse trail is opened to off-highway motorcycle use for an annual event, and Land Between the Lakes in Kentucky where trails normally closed to motorcycling are opened for an annual event.
- Much moved a recommendation that DNR pursue a policy for temporary repurposing of DNR lands for special events. Seconded by Schneider. All in favor.
- DNR staff requested STC feedback on a number of considerations for such a policy: when to close to other users, if ever; how many complaints from other users are acceptable;
- Suggestions included only allowing repurposing during low use times of year/ days of week, having a list of special events posted at trailheads and kiosks, posting event information on a website.
- Suggested approval process would include a public meeting with a presentation by requestors, followed by discussion. Results of the discussion will be used to advise the DNR in their consideration to allow the event or not. I.E. have user groups work out the issues among themselves (only works with users that are known/reachable).
- *(Later in meeting)* Motion to form Ad-Hoc committee to discuss policy for repurposing trails. Doug (Snow) 1st, Ken (Equine) 2nd motion. Motion passed (8-for, 1-opposed).

### **Lunch.**

### **1:00 P.M. – 4WD presentation**

- Luana Schneider and Orlin Clark gave a Powerpoint presentation about recreational four-wheel driving. Most people are looking for a slow, challenging experience on narrow (~8' wide) trails, or places to be able to navigate over boulders (rock crawls).
- Assembly bill 369 is currently under consideration in the legislature and would provide for a registration program similar to what exists for ATVs, UTVs, and snowmobiles.

### **1:45 P.M. – State Trails Council Member Reports**

- *All-Terrain Vehicles.* Trail Con in Antigo went well. Included attendees from equine, AWSC, WATVA, OHV, DNR, etc. Ken arranged horses to give an opportunity to show horse-ATV interactions, showing that horses can share trails with machines. Randy suggested the Council have input to the next Trail Con, WATVA not likely to lead it. Robbie suggested Tourism may be of some assistance.  
Most ATV trails now closed for the season.
- *Boards/small wheels.* Inquired about the idea of "Trail Towns".
- *Snowmobiling.* AB 407 is scheduled for hearing. Snowmobile Hall of Fame in Sept. Deer Trustee Report a concern, listing a Holiday Hunt for Dec 24-Jan 4. Snowmobilers have a concern with the gun season during snow season, no trail work would effectively be allowed until hunting is done.  
Fall workshop was recently completed in Stevens Point. There are several Dec/Jan riding events across the state. Looking forward to the first annual VIP Event in Washburn County Feb 20-21, 2014.



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- *Off-Highway Motorcycles.* Eight events for motorcycle on private lands this year. There is legislation pending for OHV. Travel Wisconsin promotion upcoming.  
Gave presentation to Boulder Junction and Vilas County on the sport. There is a desire for a dual sport destination in the state. Working to map planned and existing legal paths. Looking at State Forest single track.  
Looking into “ice ride” conversion. Article on Bryan in American Motorcyclist.
- *4-Wheel Drive Vehicles.* No report in lieu of earlier presentation.
- *Equestrian.* Pleased to see work with Forestry, Wildlife, Fisheries bureaus for recreational trails and opportunities in regards to property master plans. Stated that all trail advocates need to be involved with master planning public input.  
Regarding the Recreational Trails Program (RTP), lobbying to reauthorize and concerned that gas-tax is insufficient. Trail riding season is essentially over.
- *Bicycling.* MAP 21 (RTP) probably going to still use gas-tax. RTP could possibly go away for trails. US Route 30 authorization to get it on Adventure Cycling maps. New Bike Fed ED is former Madison Mayor Dave Cieslewicz. Bike ambassadors across state and looking to interact with other uses (recently with Trail Con for example). The Saris/Bike Summit fundraiser was sold out. Bike touring statewide maps identify linkages between trails and roads.
- *Mountain Biking.* IMBA, Bike Fed having discussions to combine forces regarding membership-sharing. Looking into IMBA Chapter arrangements in WI. Identified “The Rock” (private riding area) as a great addition to users. Looking forward to the Fall Color Festival at KMSU.
- *Hiking/Walking.* The Federal government shutdown affected recent trail building/maintenance events for both North Country Trail and Ice Age Trail. Seven MSC work weekends resulted in 16 miles per weekend. 80 people hiked the entire IAT this year. The taconite mine in Iron County a concern to the North Country Trail Association, fearing it would lead to scenery destruction, water quality (drinking water) problems, as well as light and noise pollution. Looking to get in contact with hiking groups to get a better organization and communication.
- **Future agenda items:** April agenda items requested to include hiking experience on the IAT (Ken N.) and snowmobiling (Doug).
- Slate for nominations on January agenda—elections in January. Election committee is Randy, Robbie, and Luana.

### **2:30 P.M. – 2014 meeting schedule**

- No action.

### **2:45 P.M. – Public Comment**

- Trail sharing needs to consider the user experience as part of the discussion. Commenter would prefer not to hike or ride horse and share with motorized users.
- Concern that the deer season interferes with the snowmobile season in northern WI.

### **3:00 P.M. – Adjourn**

- Motion to adjourn by Harden. Meeting adjourned.